

SEEKING WHO IS ALLAH

IBRAHIM MA'AN

ISLAMIC BOOK ON THE SECRET OF THE DIVINE TO
ENLIGHTEN AND GUIDE THE HEART TO ITS LORD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Who is Allah

A small army

The Fruitful Garden

The King

The Kingdom

The Lord of the Alamin

They Couldn't even Eat

It Was Your Fathers

All for Allah

The Heart

The Most Hated

What People Had to Say

[The Most Loved](#)

[It's Only A Test](#)

[The Source of all Good](#)

[In this World](#)

[The Brightest Light](#)

[The Great escape.... That Failed](#)

[Abu Sufyan Ibn Al-Harith](#) 

Introduction

Allah ﷻ is the One True God, the Lord of the worlds, He has no partners goes the answer. Which is true, but what does it mean? What is He like? Where is He? What is He doing? How can I know Him if I don't see Him? And honestly, why should I care?

Tough questions many cannot answer. But they have been answered not only long ago, but their answers are still available today. Allah has given us what we need to know and so much more. He is with us in our lives, when with others, when with our family, and when we are with ourselves. Allah knows you, He knows your friends, your enemies, the times you were happy, and when you were sad. He knows the good you do, the evil you commit, what you show and what you hide, He is with you when you are

alone thinking to yourself and when you speak aloud or silently He hears you. He created you and put you in this world for a reason, and one day You will die and He will resurrect you. On that day, you will be standing before Him and He will inform you of what you were doing while you were alive.

I hope to give you a richer understanding of Allah and why it is important you know Him. In this book, you will in sha Allah discover:

1. How Allah is continuously benefiting you while you are unaware.
2. How this unawareness may be a cause of severe regret.
3. What Allah gives that surpasses wealth, power and recognition and how you can attain it.
4. The influence of shaitan in your life and why

it does not matter as you might think.

5. What really matters and how it determines whether you will be successful or lose.
6. The myth of Islam meaning peace and something better and more beautiful.
7. How that meaning can be seen in human behavior and in the life of the believers.
8. Where all good comes from, and how to get the best of it.

I hope this benefits you and brings you closer to your Lord, and if unaware, it starts you on your journey to Him.

Who is Allah

The opening chapter of the Quran which is called the mother of the book starts its first chapter by saying: ‘All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Alamin’. So it gives Allah the title of Lord, which is commonly used by the believers.

“O my Lord! I have vowed to You what (the child that) is in my womb

Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): My Lord has commanded justice.

“I convey unto you the Messages of my Lord and give sincere advice to you.

Musa (Moses) said: “O my Lord! Forgive me and my brother.

“I put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord!”

When the term ‘Lord’ is used like the lord of the house, it is usually implied that such a person is the highest authority. Included in that might be his providing for his subjects, deciding their roles, choosing who stays and who leaves, and so on. So when we hear the lord of the world, we think similar, except with a lot of limitations. To better explain Allah’s lordship, here are four stories.

A small army

When Talut was calling for his people to fight against the army of Jalut, they reached 80,000 in number and were going to face an army of 250,000 soldiers, well built in physical stature, had the best weapons of their time as well as battle experience. Jalut himself was massive in size and overwhelming in strength, he and his army conquered anyone that dared to face them, it was not a surprise that many of the children of Israel chose to remain at home

rather than go and fight.

The journey was long and exhaustive and they had with them neither food nor water, they reached the river which flowed between Jordan and Palestine, Talut ordered that anyone who drinks will leave the army and return home, except those who take a handful. Most of them drank from it and left the army, leaving them with only 313 men.

On their way to the battle, as they began to think of their small number, some of them began to lament that they had no hope this day against the army of Jalut, but the knowledgeable people amongst them commented how often a small army has overcome one mightier than them by the leave of Allah.

When they reached Jalut's army, they prayed to Allah to pour on them patience so that their hearts would remain steadfast and they would not fear, to make their feet firm on the battlefield, and to grant them victory over the

disbelieving people.

During the fight, Jalut was calling boastfully for who will challenge him. Talut promised that whoever kills Jalut will marry his daughter and inherit his kingdom after him, but no one wanted to challenge him, except a little boy, Talut did not want to select him because he was young, but as no one else was willing to face Jalut, he had no other choice but to choose the young lad.

When the little boy stood in front of Jalut, he asked that was there not anyone else who they could send, as he did not want to fight a boy, but the boy replied that he wants to fight him. He fired a stone at him with a slingshot that reached his forehead, killing him instantly.

Seeing their leader die, the rest of the army was demoralized and fought a losing battle, until finally those among them who were able to fled. The children of Israel were victorious against the army of Jalut who was killed

by a little boy. That little boy was Dawud, commonly known as David. This was the story of David and Goliath as narrated from Islamic sources.

The Fruitful Garden

In the land of Ethiopia, there was a man from the people of the book who had a garden that produced for him rich fruits and vegetables in abundance. He would reap from the fruit for himself, his family and give much of it to charity so much that it became a habit for the beggars and the poor to come to the garden at the time of harvest and collect. When he died, his children who inherited the garden did not like how the poor were always coming to collect from the harvest, thinking they had no right to it, and if not for the poor, they would have had much more from the harvest, so they planned that on the next harvest, they will go early in the morning and reap from the

harvest before any poor person comes to collect.

The night before the harvest, they vowed to one another to do as they had planned. The next day, by the early morning they awoke and went to their garden saying “no poor person will enter this garden today” with strong determination.

When they arrived at their destination, they came upon a withered and dry land, resembling nothing like their ripe garden. As it was still dark in the early morning, they thought they had walked down a wrong part, but in retracing their steps, they realized that it *was* their garden. What was just the previous day a beautiful and brilliant garden with many fruits waiting for harvest had become a withered black gloomy land with nothing to reap from. Everything was gone.

The King

Nimrud was the king of Babylon and the most powerful man at his time and was said to rule the world. He ruled for 4 centuries and during that time, he had become cruel, oppressive, tyrannical and arrogant. He had considered himself to be god and commanded people to worship him, so when Ibrahim came to him calling him to worship Allah, he asked who is Allah. Ibrahim told him that Allah is the One who gives life and causes death. So the king responded by saying he also gives life and causes death. He brought two men and decided to have them killed. Then he had one of them killed and the other pardoned.


Ibrahim then told him that Allah is the One who brings the sun from the east, so let him bring it from the west. The king was silenced, in his defeat, he sent Ibrahim away.

Then Allah the Exalted sent an angel to him, ordering him to believe in Allah, but he refused. The angel called him to believe a second time, and he refused again; then a

third time, and still he refused. The angel then said, "Gather your armies and I will gather mine."

Nimrud gathered his army together at the time of sunrise, and then came an army of mosquitoes, so many that they darkened the sun. The mosquitoes descended upon them like rain sucking their blood and leaving them dry. One of those mosquitoes entered into the nostril of the king and from there flew up to his brain, and began flying around. The ringing of the mosquito drove him mad, he was in so much pain that he began to hit his head against objects hoping to drive or kill the mosquito, but to no avail, and the sheer madness made him to continue hitting his head until he killed himself.

The Kingdom

Sulaiman  had a kingdom the likes of which none ever came close to before or after him. He had a large

throne, with high rooms, whose insides were designed with beautiful images and decorations, beautiful pearls and jewels the likes of which were never seen, basins as large as reservoirs, and cauldrons too, it was said that humans couldn't make what he had.

His army other than men included birds and wild animals, and he would travel with them in a morning or afternoon the distance equivalent to a month's journey. He was the most powerful man in his time, and the children of Israel lived a golden age.

The Lord of the Alamin

There are numerous other stories; the food that came from nowhere and in abundance, the blind that could see, the knowledge of what would happen tomorrow, etc. They point to Allah's limitless authority on everyone and everything. People attribute causes to what the prophets

called 'names and falsehood' that people invented. In our time, people use names such as nature and evolution. But as can be derived from the stories, it was Allah doing as He willed, in those times and now.

When the people of the garden saw what had become of it, the best among them said: **"Did I not tell you, why don't you glorify Allah and thank Him for what He has given you and favored you with"**. Then they began blaming one another for their plotting to harvest for themselves and exclude the poor from the harvest. Finally, they admitted that they had transgressed and were all to blame. Realizing that their harvest they plotted to deprive the poor from was only a favor Allah bestowed upon them without they having any right whatsoever, and they could have been the one poor and begging, they turned to Allah in repentance and asked Allah to give them in exchange what was even better than the garden, for they knew that

with Allah is all good.

As for Sulaiman, he used to be like an ordinary king, having an ordinary kingdom with ordinary men, and then he supplicated to Allah to give him such a kingdom that no one will have after him, and we know the rest. Allah subjugated to him the wind, he had a wooden-mat like object large enough to contain him and his army along with their horses, camels, tents, etc. They would climb atop it and the wind would take him wherever he wanted to go with the mat also shading them from the sun.

His buildings and luxuries were from devils that Allah subjugated to his command. They built the massive building and structures for him and the pearls of jewellery were gotten from the ocean. Though they were devils, he was not only protected from their harm, but they were subjected to his control and domination, if anyone tried to harm him or flee, they were made to taste a blazing fire.

The worst of them were tied in chains, and he could set them free or detain as he wished.

Included in his army were birds and animals as he was made to understand the languages of animals when they communicated. And copper flowed for him to use as he wished. Allah told him to spend or withhold it if he wished, for he wasn't going to be held accountable for any of it.

And what about the army of Talut, people would say it was a miracle, but miracles are just Allah doing things in a way we don't expect, He in fact calls them His signs. So the reality is that victory is never in number, whatever battle is fought, Allah decides who the victor will be, and just because He gives victory more to those with more number does not mean He won't give victory to those with fewer numbers, as there are well-known battles fought and won by the armies who were fewer in number.

With Nimrood, it is well known that mosquitoes won't come from anywhere, but neither does earthquakes, volcanic eruption, hurricane and flood, not even eclipse. These are all by the commands of Allah, and the idea of it being caused by nature is no truer than the idols that were worshiped besides Allah. Again, they were names invented.

Yet when people hear that Allah is the Lord of the worlds i.e. creation, most limit it to creation and provision, but it is so much more than that, it's the command, the authority, the sustenance, the affairs of man, and all other matters. We think that it's the cause, but as the stories mentioned above show it's not, it's not nature, it's not math, it's not science, it's not luck, it's Allah.

Say (O Muhammad): "All the bounty is in the Hand of Allah; He grants to whom He wills. And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, the

All-Knower."

And if some good reaches them, they say, "This is from Allah," but if some evil befalls them, they say, "This is from you (O Muhammad)." Say: "All things are from Allah," so what is wrong with these people that they fail to understand any word?

And to Allah belong the treasures of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites comprehend not.

Allah, it is He Who has made for you the earth as a dwelling place and the sky as a canopy, and has given you shape and made your shapes good (looking) and has provided you with good things. That is Allah, your Lord, then blessed be Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin.

As the concept of the Lordship is flawed in most of mankind, we look for the things we need in the wrong

places, we need money to survive, we need to vote for the right person that will help the country, it's because of him such and such happened. Though not obvious, such seemingly harmless beliefs are not just false, but are extremely dangerous. They are a sign of a sickness that will show up in our actions and behaviors that will lead us to a fate similar to the idol worshipers, like the people of Nuh, etc.

To understand this, we first of all have to understand how those who understood that everything is from Allah acted differently, not just in their beliefs but in their speech and actions and how it contrasted with most other people. Who better to use than our role model, the friend of Allah?

They Couldn't even Eat

Ibrahim عليه السلام was born in a time when no one worshiped Allah, rather they worshiped idols. These idols were made of wood and stone, some of them worshiped the sun, the moon and the stars, while others even worshiped their kings. These idols were of different sizes, some in the homes, some that they carried about with them, and a place of worship made for their main idols. The father of Ibrahim was an idol maker who made and sold them to his people. And in such a time where idol worship was the norm, Ibrahim chose not only to turn away from his people and their idols to Allah alone who created the heavens and the earth, but to call his people to do likewise.

He would say to them, 'How are you devoted to these idols who cannot, eat, drink or even talk, do you not see

that they neither harm nor benefit you?'. They told him that they know, but they found their fathers doing the same, to which he informed them that they and their fathers were in error, that they should leave the idols and worship Allah alone and fear Him, that the idols are invented with no authority from Allah. That Allah alone was the one who feeds and provides drink, who heals the sick, who will bring death to us and resurrect us, so they should seek His forgiveness and worship Him alone. But no one listened to Him.

He called his father, asking him why he worshiped what cannot hear, see or benefit him. He told him that he had knowledge about Allah so he should follow him and he will guide him. He told him not to worship shaitan who is an

enemy to Allah. **K** And he informed him about the

punishment of Allah. But it only upset his father, and he refused to listen to Ibrahim.

Ibrahim wanted to show his people the futility of their ways, so on a festive occasion of theirs, he feigned sickness and remained when they all left to celebrate, then he went to their idols and broke all of them to pieces leaving only the biggest one.

When they returned, they were shocked to find what had happened to the idols, they found out that it was Ibrahim and they summoned him. When asked, he told them that it was the big idol that did it, and they should ask him. They were stunned by his response, then they said that he knows that the idols cannot speak, and that was what he wanted them to realize.

He told them that they worship what they carve with their own hands, while Allah created them and what they make. He told them to worship Allah and fear him, and

that is better for them. The idols that they worship are falsehood which they have invented. That the idols they worship beside Allah have no power to provide for them, so they should seek their provisions from Allah and be grateful to Him, and that they were going to return to Him.

His people caught him and sought to harm him. They gathered woods for days kindling a huge fire, they advised one another to help their gods by burning him. The fire was so hot they no bird flew over it except that the heat killed it. They tied him up and put him in a catapult, when they flung him into the fire. Allah commanded the fire to be coolness and safety for Ibrahim. After the fire had finally died, his people were shocked to see Ibrahim coming out of the fire unharmed, nothing burned from him except the rope with which they tied him up.

Ibrahim said to his people: "You have taken (for

worship) idols instead of Allah, and the love between you is only in the life of this world, but on the Day of Resurrection, you shall disown each other, and curse each other, and your abode will be the Fire, and you shall have no helper. O my people! I am indeed free from all that you join as partners in worship with Allah. Verily, I have turned my face towards Him Who has created the heavens and the earth". And with that he left his people.

There are a couple of things to notice in the story. First is the flawed concept of the Lordship of Allah in Ibrahim's people which allowed them to take others as gods besides Allah. Also Ibrahim informs his father about knowledge he is ignorant of, and if the father follows him, Ibrahim will guide him.

Second is their following of the crowd, blindly if I may add. Even when they knew the idols were not benefiting them, they worshiped them because they found their

fathers doing so, and that is what they were grooming their children upon also.

Third, the knowledge of the Lordship of Allah made Ibrahim different from his people and not follow them blindly but rather go against them. It led him to worship Allah alone and not to associate any partners with Him. And he was calling his people to do likewise.

Fourth, of the things Ibrahim got for his standing firm in worshiping Allah alone and not associating partners with Him, Allah made him the father of prophets, an imam to the followed, made his name mentioned after thousands of years, took him as a friend, raised his rank, and called His religion the way of Ibrahim. These are achievements people with all their riches, wealth and qualifications never attain.

Finally, and the part usually ignored, Ibrahim was alluding to the fact that his people for their taking idols as

gods besides Allah were going to be destroyed. Their king Nimrod who was also worshiped was killed by a mosquito. And Allah ﷻ said about them:

And they wanted to harm him, but We made them the worst losers.

So is it the idols or the flawed concept that leads to their destruction? It goes hand in hand, you're more likely to worship idols – even if ignorant of it- if you do not understand that Allah is the one true Lord who has authority and control over everything and that everything is ultimately from Him. So perhaps one might ask why was the concept not flawed in Ibrahim when he was born and brought up in a place where everyone thought otherwise? How did the people come to think wrongly about Allah in the first place? And why did they take idols as gods, even when they knew the idols could neither hear nor speak, let

alone eat? To understand these, we need to look back in time, before man was even created.

It Was Your Fathers

Long before man was created, there were the Jinn, they like man had a choice, and many of them chose to be rebellious of Allah rather than worshiping Him. Amongst the jinn that chose to worship Allah was one named Iblis, he was the most knowledgeable of them and worshiped Allah a great deal, but he had a secret in his heart hidden from all except Allah who is all knowing of what we conceal and what we reveal, but Allah left him for a time, and for his 'great devotion' to Allah, He raised him up amongst the angels to worship Allah in the heavens.

When the time came that Allah created Adam, he commanded the angels with iblis included to prostrate to Adam, which they all did except for Iblis, he refused because he was proud, he saw himself as better than

Adam, and he was a kafir, so Allah cursed him and banished him from Jannah. But Iblis blamed Adam for his downfall and said that he was better than Adam. He asked Allah to give him a long life which he will use to prove that Adam [and his progeny] whom Allah has honored above him will also be disobedient and ungrateful to Him, just as he was, and he vowed to mislead all the children of Adam from the path of Allah, this became his goal in his long life and he became the shaitan.

He started with Adam and his wife, when they were in Jannah, Allah gave them the freedom to go wherever they wished and eat whatever they liked, but not to come near a certain tree or else they will be wrongdoers, and he warned them that shaitan is their enemy so they should be cautious of him. Shaitan whispered to Adam telling him that if he eats the fruit of the tree, he will be immortal like the angels and will have a great kingdom. Over time,

Adam and Hawwa began to think about the tree and what they will benefit from its fruit until it drove them to eat from the tree even though he had been prohibited. So they disobeyed Allah and were removed from Jannah. But that was just the beginning.

After Adam died and his children had multiplied, they were a single tribe upon the true religion, worshiping Allah alone as Adam had taught them, they had amongst them righteous men who advised them concerning Allah and doing good. They were loved by their people, and when they died, their people missed them, and shaitan saw an opportunity in this. He came to them and suggested to them that they erect statues of those righteous men in their places of worship so that when they see them, they can remind them of Allah just like how they did when they were alive, and they obeyed. He then waited for some time and came to them and told them to make

more statues which they will take to their home in order to remember Allah even more, which they did. He waited again until after the generation passed away and the people did not know the origin of the idols, so he returned to them and told them that their fathers were worshiping those idols, so they should worship them too, and they did, and that was the beginning of idol worship.

Allah sent Nuh to his people, he called them to worship Allah alone and to leave the idols because Allah is the only one worthy of worship. That Allah was the one who created them and provides for them and that they will return to Him, so they should seek his forgiveness and repent to Him. He advised them to listen to him and obey him because he knew from Allah what they did not know. He told them that he was not asking them for any reward, that it is only a reminder and a warning so they should listen and obey, before the punishment of Allah descends

upon them for their crimes.

And rather than listen and obey, they chose to deny Nuh, and called him a liar and a madman. They said he only sought to rule over them, and if Allah wanted such from them, He would have sent angels. They called him names and made a mockery of him, at times he would call them and they will put their hands behind their ears and flee from him. They increased in their worship of idols, and commanded their children to do the same, and they did all these despite Nuh reminding them of Allah's favors on them, and that He was willing to forgive them and increase them in what He had already given them of provisions and children. In the end, they disbelieved in Nuh and proved to be what shaitan said about them, and they were drowned for their sins.

So also, as man procreated and spread, shaitan came again and again, calling them to disbelieve in Allah and

leave doing good and do evil in its place, calling them to the attractions of the worldly life of wealth and status, deluding them with false desires. Many answered his call, leaving what Allah sent through his prophets and messengers, in hope that we will be ungrateful to Allah and join him in the hellfire, and many obeyed him, and were deceived by him. That is how idols came into existence and people worshiped them, including the people of Ibrahim.

.... and follow not the footsteps of Shaitan (Satan). Verily, he is to you an open enemy. He commands you only what is evil and Fahsha (sinful), and that you should say against Allah what you know not.

Shaitan (Satan) threatens you with poverty and orders you to commit Fahsha (evil deeds, illegal sexual intercourse, sins etc.); whereas Allah

promises you Forgiveness from Himself and Bounty, and Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower.

But Shaitan (Satan) wishes to lead them far astray.

Had it not been for the Grace and Mercy of Allah upon you, you would have followed Shaitan (Satan), save a few of you.

Now you might be thinking it's the fault of the shaitan, if only he didn't come to the people of Nuh, if only he was never granted such a long life and never came to Adam. He is the one who calls people to disbelief and deceives them. Or maybe you think its Adam, if only he didn't eat the fruit in the first place, then we would have all still have been in the peace and comfort of Heaven. And that, cannot be any further from the truth, in fact, it has almost nothing to do with shaitan or even Adam. The proof of this as we

continue, begins with the story of Ayyub.

All for Allah

When shaitan heard about Ayyub's piety, steadfastness, worship and devotion, he did not believe that Ayyub was sincerely doing it for the sake of Allah, and that he like many was in reality ungrateful to Allah, and so he set out to prove it.

When he came to Ayyub, he whispered to him about the attractions of the worldly life and how he should spend more time in its pleasures rather than worshiping Allah, but Ayyub was not disturbed by it, for he cared nothing about the worldly life. Still Shaitan did not buy it, he told Allah that Ayyub is not a sincere worshiper, but rather he does it for show and that if He allows him to destroy his wealth, he will show Him the reality of Ayyub. Allah gave him the permission and shaitan destroyed all Ayyub

possessed of livestock, cattle, crop and houses. Ayyub said: "What Allah has taken away from me belongs to Him. I was only its trustee for a while. He gives to whom He wills and withholds from whom He wills." Then he prostrated to his Lord.

This angered the shaitan, he then invoked Allah saying that his heart is attached to his children, that is why he is still pretending to be sincere, and that if He gives him the permission to kill all his children, He will see that Ayyub is ungrateful to Allah. When he was given the permission, shaitan killed all of Ayyub's children. Now childless Ayyub said: "Allah sometimes gives and sometimes takes. He is sometimes pleased and sometimes displeased with our deeds. Whether a thing is beneficial or harmful to me, I will remain firm in my belief and remain thankful to my Creator.

Then shaitan invoked Allah once more saying that as

long as Ayyub is healthy, he hopes to one day regain what he has lost, so if Allah permits him to attack Ayyub's body, he will have no choice but to reveal his ungratefulness. And so he was permitted, and he entered into Ayyub's body, inflicting him with illnesses and diseases, so much that the body of Ayyub became an eyesore to the people, and it was said that they ended throwing him in the city dump.

Ayyub who was a prophet with much wealth, children and good health, now had nothing left in the world, not even a house. All he had was his wife, who believed in Allah and His Messenger, and stayed with Ayyub during his hardship, when she ran out of money, she was forced to work as a maid in order to feed herself and Ayyub.

Shunned by all his people and family except his wife, while in pain and suffering, who would have blamed Ayyub if he complained to Allah? Yet Ayyub spent this

time remembering Allah. He said:

'I praise You, the Lord of lords, Who bestowed His kindness upon me and gave me wealth and children, and there was no corner of my heart that was not filled with attachment to these worldly things, then You took all of that away from me and You emptied my heart, and there is nothing to stand between me and You. If my enemy Iblis knew of this, he would be jealous of me.

He said:

"O Lord, You gave me wealth and children, and there was no one standing at my door complaining of some wrong I had done to him. You know that I used to have a bed prepared for me, but I forsook it and said to myself: You were not created to lie on a comfortable bed. I only forsook that for Your sake."

He remained in this condition for 18 years, still recalling the favors of Allah upon him, glorifying His praises,

declaring His greatness and being devoted to Him.

When the time came for Allah ﷻ to relieve Ayyub of his hardship, He healed him of his diseases, and he looked better than before. Then He sent to him two clouds that rained gold upon him, then resurrected all his children and gave him more children. And He made him an example to those who are being tried, that they should not think that because of the hardship they are going through, that He does not care about them, rather they should accept His decree and bear the trials, and that surely His help will come, and He will compensate them for their troubles.

Notice the shaitan did the same thing as he did with others, but it didn't work with Ayyub, actually you might say it even brought him closer to Allah, the same action brought about a different result. Now you might say

because he is a prophet, but they were many righteous man and women who were tempted but did not yield, Islamic history is full of them. And besides that, there wasn't anything humanly impossible that Ayyub did, so how are one group of people misguided and another guided? And what does it have to do with the reality of Allah and what we believe about Him?

Notice the statement made by Ayyub and how it is different from what most people would say. So maybe it had to do with his knowledge, close. People who claim to believe in Allah might say the same and still act differently. Yes he had knowledge, but there was something more important. It was his heart.

The Heart

How can the heart lead to one's success or misery? What does the heart of one who will succeed have that the heart of another who will be destroyed does not? And what is it about the heart that makes it so important?

To understand the heart, Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله draws a comparison with it to the body. The main function of the body is to sustain life and to the degree that it does so, it is healthy. Its' sustaining of life is primarily in two abilities, perception and movement. The perception is the senses, it needs to see where it's going and taste to detect whether a food is good or bad. The movement is the abilities of the limbs and organs, to walk, breathe and digest food. Their work one way or the other contributes to its primary function of sustaining life.

Weakness in this function is seen in a typical old man. He cannot move as a youth, perhaps his sight becomes weak or completely blind, he can't eat any kind of food but rather has to be careful about what he eats. Compare that to a typical doctor or bodybuilder, he is strong, energetic, and able to heal himself and bounce back much faster from diseases. The old man is sick while the doctor is healthy

What differentiates the old man from the doctor is the presence of diseases in the body. Diseases cause degeneration in the body's function of sustaining life, primarily affecting its abilities of movement and perception so they fail to work as they ought to. By diseases of the body, I mean that which affects the health of the body and weakens its function to sustain life.

For example, failure in the body's ability to perceive can be mild, where his sight and hearing are not as strong. It

can be complete whereby a person is blind, or it can be incorrect whereby a person hallucinates i.e. sees things that are not in reality there, or whereby sweet food tastes bitter to him.

Failure in the body's ability to move can be seen in indigestion, cravings, or even aversion to nourishment. The failure comes as a result of what is consumed as is known with junk food, or as a result of wrong application of something, as is seen with drugs, or even a physical attack that damages the body.

As these abilities are needed to sustain life, when they are weakened, the body's function weakens, which can appear as discomfort, weakness or pain, the severity of which depends on the degree to which it fails to sustain life. And if it reaches a point whereby it can no longer sustain life, it dies.

Now for the heart;

The main function of the heart is to remain in a state of purity and soundness and to the degree that it does so, it is healthy. Its purity is primarily in two abilities, perception and desire. The perception like the body's is similar to the senses, but deals more with seeking and knowing the truth, what it sees and hears in relation to reality and whether or not it benefits.

They are deaf, dumb and blind. So they do not understand

Those who reject Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) are deaf and dumb in darkness.

Verily, it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts which are in the breasts that grow blind

The desires are what the heart intends and seeks due to its' attachment to the desired object irrespective of whether or not it will benefit it, think of a man hopelessly

in love with a woman. These abilities one way or the other contribute to its primary function of being pure.

Beautified for men is the love of things they desire; women, children, much of gold and silver (wealth), branded beautiful horses, cattle and well-tilled land. This is the pleasure of the present world's life; but Allah has the excellent return with Him.

And whoever desires a reward in (this) world, We shall give him of it; and whoever desires a reward in the Hereafter, We shall give him thereof.

Say (O Muhammad): "I have been forbidden to worship those whom you invoke (worship) besides Allah." Say: "I will not follow your vain desires. If I did, I would go astray, and I would not be one of the rightly guided."

Weakness in this function is seen in one whom you might call a criminal who is careless in sinning, more specifically, disobeying the commands of Allah. He pursues the life of this world with greed and lust. He disregards the book of Allah, believing it to be words of man, does actions seeking thereby the enjoyment of the life of this world. Compare that to a true scholar or worshiper who is careful about committing sins and strives to avoid them altogether, he is conscious of Allah, doing actions according to the guidance of His book, and seeks with them His Pleasure and reward. The criminal is sick and the scholar is healthy.

What differentiates the worshiper from the criminal is the presence of diseases in the heart. Diseases cause degeneration in the heart's function of remaining pure, primarily affecting its abilities of perception and desire so they fail to work as they ought to. By diseases of the heart,

I meant that which affects the health and weakens its function to remain pure.

Unlike the body, corruption is a better description than failure. Corruption of the perception of the heart is whatever causes it -usually from the life of this world- to take other than Allah as the one true object of desire. This is as a result of the corruption of the person's knowledge, so the heart perceives as true what does not benefit it.

And We had assigned them the (faculties of) hearing (ears), seeing (eyes), and hearts, but their hearing (ears), seeing (eyes), and their hearts availed them nothing since they used to deny the Ayat (Allah's Prophets and their Prophethood, proofs, evidences, verses, signs, revelations, etc.) of Allah

Notice Ayyub عليه السلام did not complain for whatever he lost when he was tried because he had the correct knowledge

and he already had what he wanted, Allah.

With the knowledge corrupted, the heart of the sick person attaches itself to what does not benefit it and then seeks to obtain that desire usually at the cost of disobedience to Allah. Such a person becomes desirous on the object which sows in such heart desires of greed, pride, lust, etc.

Nuh was accused by his people of seeking leadership amongst them and wanting wealth, and that none followed him except the weak and the poor. They desired the attractions of the worldly life and saw the message of Nuh as something that took them away from it.

Though these abilities are needed for the heart to be pure, you might have noticed that when they are weakened, the signs unlike the body have no physical appearance, it is seen in people's disregard of the rights of Allah and disobedience to His Messenger, it is also known

as the hardness of the heart, or worse, its death. When the heart is affected by diseases, it becomes corrupt, but unlike the body where if its primary function fails then it dies, rather than the heart dying, it only increases in corruption, making it worse than death.

We understand the implication of a body that dies, but people vastly underestimate the implication of a corrupted heart. What makes a heart so important that its corruption will cause people to be destroyed?

First of all, you have to understand just how important the heart is. All that Allah says is true, no doubt about that, and when He then swears, it is to show emphasis. Allah did not swear with anything more than what he swore with regarding the heart, saying about it:

By the sun and its brightness; And by the moon as it follows it (the sun); And by the day as it shows up (the sun's) brightness; And by the night

as it conceals it (the sun); And by the heaven and Him Who built it; And by the earth and Him Who spread it, And by the soul and Him Who perfected him in proportion;.....Indeed he succeeds who purifies it. And indeed he fails who corrupts it.

It being the heart. And he says about the Day of Judgement:

The Day where neither wealth nor sons will avail. Except him who brings to Allah a clean heart.

The Prophet ﷺ said about it: *“There is a piece of flesh in the body. If it is sound, the whole body is sound. If it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. It is the heart.”*

Iblis was one of the best worshipers of Allah, his knowledge was perhaps at a level many scholars will never reach, he was raised up to the heavens to worship Allah along with the angels, in heaven was all he will ever need,

free of corruption and want, free of bad influence, all he had to do was worship Allah. Yet the creation of Adam was a trial for him and he fell from Allah's grace and became the shaitan.

Adam on the other hand was in a similar condition when in Paradise with his wife. He could do all he wanted except eat of the tree which was forbidden to him. When shaitan lured him into eating of it, the punishment came immediately, his clothing was removed, his crown was lost, and his nakedness was revealed. But he turned to Allah in that desperate situation, seeking His forgiveness with a repentant heart and he was forgiven.

What people don't seem to understand is that we are being tested (end of next chapter), and the only way to pass the test is with a pure heart. Shaitan's heart was corrupted, it mattered not the condition he was in, he was going to be destroyed. Adam's heart was pure, as bad as

the sin was, Allah forgave him for it. All I've mentioned since the first chapter was building up to this: **The people who will succeed are those with a pure heart, and the people who will fail are those with a corrupted heart.** Take your time to think about those who failed and their hearts, and those who succeeded and their hearts.

Perhaps the one who had the greatest signs of Allah sent to him was Firawn. He had the firstborn sons of the children of isreal killed to avert the dream of him and his people perishing at the hand of a man from the children of isreal, yet he ended up being the one who raised Musa. Many years later, Musa comes to him informing him that he is a Messenger from Allah, calling him to believe in Him. When he rejected, Musa showed him how his staff would become a snake when placed on the ground, and how his hand becomes pure white when he put it under

his arm and removed it, the first two signs that he was truthful. But Firawn claimed that he was a magician and summoned all the best magicians of his kingdom to compete with Musa.

His magicians were not only defeated, but they also believed in Musa and accepted Islam, and so Firawn had them tortured to death. Then a drought came unto the land of Egypt, and when it became severe on the people, they came to Musa, telling him to invoke his Lord for water, and if their water returns, they will believe in him. So he prayed to Allah and water returned, but they refused to believe.

Then their crops became infected with locust, destroying it, so they returned to Musa, making the same promise as before, and when it was lifted, they did the same as before. And this continued with the lice plague, and the frog plague, and the river Nile turning to blood.

And yet Firawn never believed.

Many would think if they were in Firawn's shoes, they would have believed, what they do not realize is that we all are in Firawn's shoes, just provided with different signs and given different favors. Firawn like all of us, was being tested, but the hardness and corruption of his heart did not make him believe. And though the test is different for people, the root of failure is in the corruption of the heart, not shaitan, not the idols. So the solution isn't to believe where other people failed, because it has already become clear, the solution is to purify the heart, a pure heart will succeed no matter the test like Ayyub, and corrupted heart will never accept the truth no matter the signs shown, like Firawn.

You might have noticed that I'm not clarifying what exactly is a pure heart and a corrupt heart, that is because its reality is deep and opened to people according to their

level, many more understand it better than me, and putting it in words fails to give an accurate description, I would however like to describe it with two stories, so as to provide a better understanding.

The Most Hated

When I decided to move into another house intending to be closer to a place that was more conducive for me to study and learn the religion, my parents thanks to the media believed that I was going to become a terrorist, I tried to explain things to them but it was to no avail, so I left anyway. After hell was raised and things were starting to die down (or so I thought), I got a text from my mom that went something like this:

'How are you? I am sleepless every night worried about you, my heart is full of pains every night. One day you will only hear that am no more.'

What did she mean by this? At first I chose to ignore it, and then I decided to reply (big mistake). Reading it now, I can see what I did wrong, but that was who I was at that

time, rather than address/ignore the emotion, I took it personal and chose to use logic to respond to the statement. Logically thinking she was just trying to make me feel guilty, and explain to her there was nothing to worry about, but humans don't respond to logic. It went something like this:

'Why are you worried when I was in worse conditions and you didn't care, and now that am happy you're worried, should I now be unhappy so that you can be happy, cause it seems you only care about how you feel. And when you were doing such and such and we were worried and you didn't care, can you now understand how we felt?'

That will talk some sense into her I thought, now she should finally understand, she'll probably read it and think okay that true, there's really nothing to be worried about, after all he was in a worse situation and I didn't know, and

I guess I understand how they felt when I was doing what I was doing, let me just leave him, he is in good hands', or so I thought.

Here's the reply that came:

I have cursed the day I conceived you, go and check your other message

It was too long so she sent it through whatsapp, she was just getting started:

Thanks for the insult, you ungrateful child, go and do whatever you want, as from today henceforth you are no longer my son, you ungrateful child, I did such and such for you, I don't ever want to see you again, and when I die, don't even come near my body because it is everlasting curse that will follow you.

The end? Not yet

That so and so, I did such and such for him, I did this and that, and this is what he says, I curse him, he shall

never have peace, it will never be better for him, he will never

.....
.....
You can fill the rest:

Now, if many years later I'm dead and people are still reading this book, the story won't matter, people fight with one another, it doesn't even really matter now. Here's what mattered:

She was hurt by my decision and worried, and so she sent a text describing her condition, apparently, it was so bad it was going to kill her and it would be my fault. I took it offensive as a way of making me feel guilty, according to the message she cared and was worried. So I responded with a message, giving three logical reasons as to why she did not care, the message showed no consideration for her feelings, she took it as harsh, insulting and shaming. It

was too much for her to swallow, so she responded as she did.

Now what will you call what I did? My father said I was rude and had no right, my mother said I was ungrateful, my teacher said it was wrong, my uncle said similar. You know what the Arabs will say? They will say I did kufr.

When we say a Kafir, it comprises more than just disbelief. Shaitan in the sense of the word believes in Allah, he has knowledge about Him, was worshiping him, and was amongst the angels, but he is, in reality, a Kafir.

Kufr in its root form conveys the idea of covering. It is a term describing reciprocating a favor with evil, if someone does good to us, we respond in kind, When we do evil to someone, it is most likely that the person has hurt us in some way. But when someone does good to you and you treat him like he has hurt you, it is as if you forgot the good done to you, which should have made you to

reconsider before acting in such a manner to the person. In other words, you covered the favor done to you like it never happened and then responded with disobedience, harm, evil and their likes. I guess my mom was closest to the answer, not surprising as she was the one who felt it the most.

Kufr has some characteristics: using how my mom felt as an example:

It hurts: My words were harsh, they showed a lack of consideration for how she felt, my reasons were faults that she was guilty and ashamed of, and it hurt her that I mentioned them.

The Kafir is seen as a wicked person: It takes wickedness to do kufr, it shows that you don't appreciate the favor of the person. Yes my mom was guilty of what was mentioned, but in her eyes, her carrying me for nine months, suckling me for years, caring for me, being

dependent on her and so on, were supposed to outweigh any bad she is doing and will do, if she didn't care for me, why would she do those things, as the saying goes. And for me to have ignored that and treated her as such, is wicked.

The Kafir becomes ugly in the eyes of the person to whom the kufr is done: When she saw the message, I'm guessing like magic, all the care, love and worry from the previous message turned to malice and hatred, and I became her enemy, like shaitan to humanity. She didn't want to see me or hear from me, she regretted having me, maybe if she could return back in time, she could have stopped my conception, or even worse than that.

The worst Judgement is carried out on him: This should go without saying, as she clearly showed, she wanted to do everything she can to punish me, she cursed me, she disowned me, she called the family to tell them how ungrateful I am. She did it all, she did it all.

What People Had to Say

Though it's not surprising, it's interesting that most saw her as the victim. My father took it as an opportunity to tell people what an evil person I am. No one cared how I felt, and it's understandable, who will support a child against his own mother? After all, aren't there mothers who are worse?

The thing is, when it comes to Allah عز وجل, people seem to forget that the sins they commit are just as bad, just as ugly, and just as wicked. Actually, they're worse than all that, and the description of what I did applies to them, myself included, and some of them even go as far as leaving islam. Some even began to quote the teachings of Islam and what it said about parents, forgetting their own

sins against Him, yet they never even read the Quran let alone act according to it [they googled it].

And just like that man justifies his own kufr. Some of my accusers were people who don't pray, indulge in major sins and show no shred of guilt. In fact, they were even going as far as to mock those who were steadfast. Perhaps it is understandable if they were non-Muslims who claim freedom of religion or don't believe in any god, but these were people who were calling themselves Muslims, remembering Allah when it suited their desires and forgetting Him likewise.

With this story in mind, notice what Allah says about kufr and its people:

And if We give man a taste of Mercy from Us, and then withdraw it from him, verily! He is despairing, ungrateful. But if We let him taste good (favor) after evil (poverty and harm) has

touched him, he is sure to say: "Ills have departed from me." Surely, he is exultant, and boastful (ungrateful to Allah).

And He gave you of all that you asked for, and if you count the Blessings of Allah, never will you be able to count them. Verily! Man is indeed an extreme wrong-doer, ungrateful

And when harm touches you upon the sea, those that you call upon besides Him vanish from you except Him (Allah Alone). But when He brings you safely to land, you turn away (from Him). And man is ever ungrateful.

See you not that Allah has subjected to you (mankind) all that is on the earth, and the ships that sail through the sea by His Command? He withholds the heaven from falling on the earth except by His Leave. Verily, Allah is, for mankind,

full of Kindness, Most Merciful. It is He, Who gave you life, and then will cause you to die, and will again give you life (on the Day of Resurrection). Verily! Man is indeed an ingrate.

And verily, when We cause man to taste of Mercy from Us, he rejoices thereat, but when some ill befalls them because of the deeds which their hands have sent forth, then verily, man (becomes) ingrate!

Verily! Man (disbeliever) is ungrateful to his Lord. And to that fact he bears witness (by his deeds);

Here's the thing, the kufr to my mother is not the same as man's kufr to Allah ﷻ, you cannot compare Allah's favor to that of the whole mankind put together. If I died, no one can bring me back, life is a favor from Allah, and

people don't cherish until they are in their last moments.

Though I accepted I was wrong, my response didn't come from nowhere, humans have problems with themselves, and I certainly didn't lay false charges against her, she was guilty of them and didn't try to deny them, in fact, one can say she validated my claim. Allah is far above wronging anybody, even if He punished us, we are more than deserving of it, and yet He pardons and overlooks much of it.

If the kufr is not the same, how is it when it comes to Allah? To understand kufr better, one has to also have a better understanding of its opposite, which is illustrated in the next story.

The Most Loved

In our time lived a man whom I shall call Zayd, who benefitted many people with his wealth. He didn't just feed the poor and do charity, he used to look for the people who were hungry and encouraged all of them to come to his house, no matter their number.

He built houses for many people, in his town, neighboring towns and even further away, no one knows the number of houses he built. He would invite a man to a new house, ask him what he thought about the house, being a good house the man would praise it, and to his surprise he will be handed the keys, that the house belonged to him.

He also built many mosques, and expanded others, furnishing them with fans, carpets, air conditioners, etc.

He would give generous donations to the various mosques and told the people not to call his name, let them just say that someone has donated to the mosque for the sake of Allah. These mosques were also in his as well as neighboring areas, and no one knows the number of mosques he built.

He had a list of names of poor people he was feeding. He would buy them bags of rice, oil, vegetables, seasoning, etc., what was available in a decent home. They would come to his house lined up, he would be distributing them one by one and giving them money, and he told them that when what he has given them has finished, they should come back and he would give them again. Being a place with many poor people, the number of people that were coming could not be counted, so much so that the people at the back will be afraid it would finish before it reached them.

He went out looking for people that had problems, he would go to hospitals, ask of the people who cannot pay their hospital bills and pay for them. He took care of orphans and raised them up like they were his own children, he sponsored people overseas. At times he will run out of money and they were people that still had needs, so he would sell one of his houses just to help them.

He built schools for the poor and made them free. There were no school fees, the uniforms were free, the students were fed free of charge, and he would be paying the teachers and staff. But that's not all, he would still go to other schools of the poor, ask about the students who have not paid their fees, and he would pay not just for a term, but a session, which was a whole year. And he would also pay the salaries of those school's teachers and staffs. Though they were poor and lower class, there was no one around him who did not go to school. Even the teachers

were motivated to teach the kids.

Ramadan was a blessing to the people, for the complete days of fasting he supplied to the poor who came to his house, the people in the mosque, as well as in the schools, students, teachers, everyone. He fed them the same food he was eating in his house, there were fruits, snacks, drinks, chicken, meat, you name it. If he was eating it in his house, the people will eat the same also.

How do you think the people felt about him and what did they do in return? Many years after he has died and people are still praying for him, anywhere he is known. Many people who thought they will never amount to anything were wealthy through his sponsorship. Two Jummah prayers will not pass in his mosque except that the imam will pray for him. On eid, gifts will be sent to his house. People pay visits to his wives and children from time to time. None of his children will look for work except

that when they see his name, they will be given the job. People from all over talk about what he has done for them, in open and in secret, no one knows how many people he helped with his wealth. When he died, the people cried as if they lost their wealth and family. He touched the lives of so many people, and all they had for him was love and praise.

If the people were asked why they did such, it's obvious you'll hear answers like the kind of man he was, his generosity, the way he helped them, and so on. It doesn't take a genius to see that their actions came from their heart, nobody was forcing them to praise him or pray for him, they wanted to, and it's clear why. They did so with happiness because of how grateful they were.

Here's the thing, if rather than Zayd, it was Allah, then the feeling would be called iman and the actions would be called Islam. The reality of Islam is not peace, it's

gratitude. Gratitude for the favors Allah has bestowed upon you as a human being, including what you know and what you don't:

And He it is Who has subjected the sea (to you), that you eat thereof fresh tender meat (i.e. fish), and that you bring forth out of it ornaments to wear. And you see the ships ploughing through it, that you may seek (thus) of His Bounty (by transporting the goods from place to place) and that you may be grateful.

And Allah has brought you out from the wombs of your mothers while you know nothing. And He gave you hearing, sight, and hearts that you might give thanks (to Allah).

And Allah has made for you in your homes an abode, and made for you out of the hides of the cattle (tents for) dwelling, which you find so light

(and handy) when you travel and when you stay (in your travels), and of their wool, fur, and hair (sheep wool, camel fur, and goat hair), a furnishing and articles of convenience (e.g. carpets, blankets, etc.), a comfort for a while.

And Allah has made for you out of that which He has created shades, and has made for you places of refuge in the mountains, and has made for you garments to protect you from the heat (and cold), and coats of mail to protect you from your (mutual) violence. Thus does He perfect His Grace unto you, that you may submit yourselves to His Will (in Islam).

They recognize the Grace of Allah, yet they deny it and most of them are Kaafiroon. (remember kufr, yes, that's it)

Allah's bounties are numerous, He never had to do any

of it, but he did so out of His Mercy, and the believers realize this, they express gratefulness and act the way they do. Islam is neither a compulsion nor a religion with mindless rituals like brushing the teeth or having a meal, the heart of a true believer is attached to those actions, out of gratefulness for what his Lord has done for him. They are ready to do all they can for the sake of Allah, as gratitude for what he has done. Like the people who are always praising and praying for Zayd, they were happy to do all their actions, and it came from their heart, and such heart is a purified heart. They were not doing it for any reason other than seeking Allah's Pleasure due to what He had given them from His favors. See it also in Ibrahim and Ayyub. Compare to the people of Nuh and Firawn and other disbelievers, do you think they were grateful to Allah, it didn't mean that Allah did not bestow upon them similar favors, rather their hearts were corrupted.

Question: What do you think will happen if someone came to the mosque to insult Zayd?

Worse, what if the person was one of the people that he helped? The least that will happen is that he will be attacked. And if the people were asked, they will probably say things in line with my mom, how ungrateful such a person is, and the sign of kufr just like it showed with my mom will show again. And that, is the same with Allah, except worse, and it is so because of the enormity of what Allah has done for us even presently. He told Dawud that the least of His blessing is a breath. And He unlike with man, does not need anything from us, rather we are dependent on Him. The reality of kufr is ungratefulness. Notice the importance of these favors, what we do despite them and what Allah says about it:

And surely, We gave you authority on the earth and appointed for you therein provisions (for

your life). Little thanks do you give.

Then I (shaitan) will come to them from before them and behind them, from their right and from their left, and You will not find most of them as thankful ones

Truly, Allah is full of Bounty to mankind, but most of them are ungrateful.

It is He, Who has created for you (the sense of) hearing (ears), sight (eyes), and hearts (understanding). Little thanks you give.

Zayd was loved by the people because of what he did for them and how much they valued it. If they were to love someone better than him, it will be because he did even better than Zayd. The purpose of the heart is to attach itself to an object desiring benefit from it. Due to this desire, it forms intentions that the rest of the body acts towards fulfilling. These actions especially when taken to

fulfill the desires of the heart can be regarded as acts of worship.

So the purpose of the heart is to find that object to which it attaches itself to and desires. The purity of the heart is in establishing that the true object of desire is Allah and removing every other thing besides Him. The corruption of the heart is in attaching itself to other than Allah. Ayyub was different because his heart was attached to Allah. The idol worshippers disobeyed their prophets because their hearts were attached to other than Allah i.e. the life of this world, but as they found out, what they desired was vanity and benefitted them for only a short while, though many are yet to realize.

Compare how the people felt about Zayd to what the believers were saying about Allah and notice how they came from the heart.

Nuh عليه السلام said to his people:

What is the matter with you, [that you fear not Allah (His punishment), and] you hope not for reward (from Allah or you believe not in His Oneness). While He has created you in (different) stages.

Sulaiman عليه السلام said:

"My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your Favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds, such as please You, and make my off-spring good. Truly, I have turned to You in repentance, and truly, I am one of the Muslims."

Yusuf عليه السلام said to the two prisoners:

I have abandoned the religion of a people that believe not in Allah and are disbelievers in the Hereafter (i.e. the Kan'aniun of Egypt who were

polytheists and used to worship sun and other false deities). "And I have followed the religion of my fathers , - Ibrahim (Abraham), Ishaq (Isaac) and Ya'qub (Jacob), and never could we attribute any partners whatsoever to Allah. This is from the Grace of Allah to us and to mankind, but most men thank not (i.e. they neither believe in Allah, nor worship Him).

The Christians that fled their people who were worshiping idols and tried to force them to do the same said:

....Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, never shall we call upon any ilah (god) other than Him; if we did, we should indeed have uttered an enormity in disbelief (kufr). These our people have taken for worship aliha (gods) other than Him (Allah). Why do they not bring for them

a clear authority? And who does more wrong than he who invents a lie against Allah.

It's Only A Test

Allah ﷻ already knows the believer and the Kafir, if He wanted, He could have punished them immediately, but the people would have denied and said they would have been grateful to Allah. Nobody would accept that he is ungrateful, so Allah put us here to test us.

Verily, We have created man from Nutfah drops of mixed semen (discharge of man and woman), in order to try him, so We made him hearer, seer. Verily, We showed him the way, whether he be grateful or ungrateful.

"This is by the Grace of my Lord to test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful! And whoever is grateful, truly, his gratitude is for (the good of)

his ownself, and whoever is ungrateful, (he is ungrateful only for the loss of his ownself). Certainly! My Lord is Rich (Free of all wants), Bountiful."

And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to As-Sabirin (the patient ones, etc.).

The heart that is corrupted desires the dunya and seeks it. It cares not about Allah's limits and disobeys His Messenger. It goes to the extent of mocking and ridiculing those who choose to obey. So it commits many sins and is led astray.

It is not the idols that cause a man's destruction, neither is it the shaitan, it is not even money. It is the kufr that is in the heart, so Allah beautified the dunya to expose such a heart, and leaves the shaitan to mislead them, and none

are misled except the wicked. Unfortunately, that is many of mankind.

As for the pure heart, it desires only Allah and is not affected by any condition, riches, poverty, sickness etc. Like Ayyub, they don't stop it from Allah. In fact, it becomes like a challenge to see how much they can endure for the sake of their Lord, and how much closer they can get to Him, for such a heart desires closeness with its Lord.

Allah commands us to be grateful:

Therefore remember Me (by praying, glorifying, etc.). I will remember you, and be grateful to Me (for My countless Favors on you) and never be ungrateful to Me.

O you who believe (in the Oneness of Allah – Islamic Monotheism)! Eat of the lawful things that We have provided you with, and be grateful to

Allah, if it is indeed He Whom you worship.

"You worship besides Allah only idols, and you only invent falsehood. Verily, those whom you worship besides Allah have no power to give you provision, so seek your provision from Allah (Alone), and worship Him (Alone), and be grateful to Him. To Him (Alone) you will be brought back.

Nay! But worship Allah (Alone and none else), and be among the grateful.

So eat of the lawful and good food which Allah has provided for you. And be grateful for the Graces of Allah, if it is He Whom you worship.

Nobody will ever claim that he is ungrateful, so we are tested, and the tests reveal the reality of the people. Life is a test, Ayyub, the prophets, their people, all man is put to the test. That is why we're here, the pure heart will prove

that it is grateful and the corrupted heart will prove otherwise.

When we are grateful, not only is it from the purity of the heart, but Allah gives such a heart that which is more important than any good a corrupt heart can possess in the world. But before you know that, it's important you understand how we actually derive good from Allah.

The Source of all Good

When Adam and his wife ate from the fruit and their nakedness was shown, they ran away from themselves. Allah called out to them and they responded saying:

"Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers."

So what's the mercy? We know it when we see a mother's love for her child, the young for the old and in our wanting to do good to someone. But to what extent does the mercy reach?

One of the best descriptions of mercy is in the area surrounding Hellfire which is said to be barren land, no wind, no grass, no water, not even sand nothing, hell and its surrounding is far removed from Allah's Mercy, hence

there is no good in it. However, as one moves further away, he begins to notice fertile land, as he goes further towards its direction away from the direction of hell, the scenery gets better with vegetation, soothing wind, beautiful scent etc., this is because he is coming closer to Allah's Mercy, and he is coming closer to good, he is coming closer to paradise.

The Mercy of Allah is a broad term that comprises of all the good that reaches us, no exception; what we have of worldly possession, our health, cure from sickness, our food and water, etc.

Allah gave the womb of a mother the name 'Rahimu' derived from His names 'Rahman' and 'Rahim' both describing Merciful. The womb is where a child stays before his mother gives birth to him. During that period, the child, human or animal is weak and cannot benefit itself. It is completely dependent on the mother for its

nourishment, and the womb serves as protection from harm and shelter. Similar is Allah's Mercy in how it covers the creation and benefits them and shields them from harm, the creation not being able to survive without it.

**«.....and My mercy encompasses all things.".....
» [Al-A'raf: 156]**

In its truest sense, Mercy is from Allah alone, however, from His Mercy, others possess mercy, some higher than others, but still nothing compared to Allah's. It is amongst the most honorable of His Names and some of His other attributes like His Forgiveness are through it.

The extent to Allah's Mercy cannot be comprehended, and its importance cannot be overstated. Still are some examples of how Allah uses it to give more understanding. Allah refers to the sending of His books as His Mercy.

«And We gave Musa the Scripture, after We had destroyed the former generations, as

enlightenment for the people and guidance and mercy that they might be reminded» [Al-Qasas: 43]

He calls the relief one experiences after being afflicted by a calamity as His Mercy.

«And when We give the people a taste of mercy after adversity has touched them, at once they conspire against Our verses.....» [Yunus: 21]

The rain that provides water for the creatures of the earth is also His Mercy.

«And it is He who sends the winds as good tidings before His mercy, and We send down from the sky pure water» [Al-Furqan: 48]

When the wife of Azeez was confessing her crimes, she said it is the Mercy of Allah that holds one back from the urge to commit sins.

«And I do not acquit myself (i.e. she is not

innocent). Indeed, the soul is a persistent enjoiner of evil, except those upon which my Lord has mercy. Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful."» [Yusuf: 53]

It included the restoration of Ayyub's health, along with his wealth and children, after he was afflicted with a severe trial.

«And We granted him his family and a like [number] with them as a mercy from Us and a reminder for those of understanding» [Sad: 43]

Coming into Islam and being purified from the evil deeds is also from His Mercy.

«And if Allah willed, He could have made them [of] one religion, but He admits whom He wills into His mercy. And the wrongdoers have not any protector or helper» [Ash-Shura: 8]

In this World

The mercy of Allah can be said to be in two forms, what is seen and what is not. We see the mercy of Allah in the worldly life around us, the vegetation, the rain, mineral resources and so on. They all in one form or the other provide nourishment for us. It also includes wealth and luxury, and is seen in both Muslim and Kafir as Allah grants it to both.

Contrary to popular beliefs, that someone receives the good in this life does not mean he will have the same in the hereafter. In fact, the good of this world is given mostly to people that don't believe in Allah, see Firawn and Nimrod, even the powerful nations of our time. It's no coincidence that the most prosperous nations of the world are those that do not believe in Allah and commit the most atrocities. Most times their flourishing comes before their

destruction.

And when We decide to destroy a town (population), We (first) send a definite order (to obey Allah and be righteous) to those among them [or We (first) increase in number those of its population] who are given the good things of this life. Then, they transgress therein, and thus the word (of torment) is justified against it (them). Then We destroy it with complete destruction.

There is however another side of the mercy that is not seen but is even more important. It's the mercy that guarantees one's safety from the fire and admittance into Paradise. Due to it being more important, many of the prophets and righteous men who followed them chose not to seek the luxuries of the worldly life except what they needed. The believers work for it. Whoever possesses it is saved, and those without it will be destroyed. And it is

what resides in the heart.

All man receive Allah's mercy whether his heart is sound or corrupt, but the hidden part of the mercy is only for those whose hearts are pure. And this mercy is the light of Allah.

The Brightest Light

We all seem to have a good idea that darkness is bad and light is good. The light of our eyes enables us to see and blindness limits us and puts us in a situation where we do not know where we are or what is around us. Allah usually describes what leads to our success as the light and what leads to our destruction as darknesses (plural).

Allah is the Wali (Protector or Guardian) of those who believe. He brings them out from darkness[es] into light. But as for those who disbelieve (kufr), their Auliya (supporters and helpers) are Taghut [false deities and false leaders, etc.], they bring them out from light into darkness[es].

Wherewith Allah guides all those who seek His

Good Pleasure to ways of peace, and He brings them out of darkness[es] by His Will unto light and guides them to a Straight Way (Islamic Monotheism).

(This is) a Book which We have revealed unto you (O Muhammad ﷺ) in order that you might lead mankind out of darkness[es] (of disbelief and polytheism) into light (of belief in the Oneness of Allah and Islamic Monotheism) by their Lord's Leave to the Path of the All-Mighty, the Owner of all Praise.

So what is the light? Allah explains it as follows:

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is as (if there were) a niche and within it a lamp, the lamp is in glass, the glass as it were a brilliant star, lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east (i.e. neither it

gets sun-rays only in the morning) nor of the west (i.e. nor it gets sun-rays only in the afternoon, but it is exposed to the sun all day long), whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself), though no fire touched it. Light upon Light! Allah guides to His Light whom He wills. And Allah sets forth parables for mankind, and Allah is All-Knower of everything.

What is needed to light the fire of a lamp? Oil, wick and glass. The oil is fuel for the fire, the wick acts as a carrier, dampened with the oil and lit, and finally it is encased within a glass.

What kind of light is Allah talking about?

He tells about a light so bright, the fuel used is olive oil, but not just any olive oil, it is gotten from a tree so fruitful it gets its nourishment all day and night 24 hours rather than only when the sun is up. As a result, the tree

produces oil so luminous it almost wants to catch fire even before it is lit. When the wick is dampened with such oil, even before it is lit, it has already been encased in a glass so bright it resembles a brilliant star. So when the wick is put in oil so luminous, encased in a glass shining as bright as the stars, what is the result when it is lit? Allah calls it light upon light. This is the parable of faith, better known as Iman, the light of the believer. But how do we understand it?

As a lamp consists of three materials to produce the light; Oil to serve as fuel, the wick as a carrier for the fuel and glass to encase it when lit, so also three things are needed to produce the light of Iman; Knowledge to serve as fuel, motivation to serve as the carrier for the fuel, and a pure heart to manifest it.

Knowledge is like the oil gotten from the tree of revelation. Allah revealed to His Prophet, the knowledge

from which we derived the Quran and the sunnah. It's the knowledge of Allah, the reality of the world, our enemy the shaitan, the actions that bring us closer to Him, the limits He has set, and so on. The knowledge acts as guidance for us, a guide to the path of eternal success.

This is the Book (the Qur'an), whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are Al-Muttaqun(People conscious of Allah)

But the knowledge alone is not enough, many people have the knowledge but the knowledge did not benefit them. Something needs to act as a carrier for the knowledge and that is our motivation. Motivation is the wick. Just like the oil needs a wick to absorb it so that it can be ready to be lit, we need to have motivation, determination and will, as we know when we lack motivation for something, we usually do not do that thing, even if we know it is good for us.

Finally, the light needs a place to burn, that place is the heart. The pure heart has the qualities of glass, it is smooth to touch, firm and strong. It also has the qualities of accepting and reflecting light, when it hears the truth it accepts it, acts on it and spreads it.

And that those who have been given knowledge may know that it (this Quran) is the truth from your Lord, and that they may believe therein, and their hearts may submit to it with humility. And verily, Allah is the Guide of those who believe, to the Straight Path

The corrupted heart however has the qualities of stone, it is rough to touch, it is coarse, hard and dark as compared to the crystal. It neither accepts nor reflects light. Such a heart has no determination to worship, so even if called to Allah it will not listen, for it cannot hear it, and if light was put in it, the light will die, it cannot receive

light.

Is he whose breast Allah has opened to Islam, so that he is in light from His Lord (as he who is not)? So, woe to those whose hearts are hardened against remembrance of Allah! They are in plain error!

So the pure heart, which has a strong will to worship Allah, fueled by the knowledge of the Book of Allah and the sunnah of His Messenger, the result is righteous good deeds, and it is the light of the believer, the light that will enable him to reach Jannah.

The stone heart on the other hand is the heart that has been corrupted with sins, its desire and motivation is for the worldly life and not Allah, even if it thinks otherwise. The knowledge that should fuel the actions is corrupted also by desires and falsehood. Consequently, it has no light, and cannot produce righteous good deeds. Such a

heart might even seem to do good deeds, but there is no substance behind it, and when shaitan comes to it, it is willing to obey him, and is led astray. Again, it is not shaitan that leads people to their destruction, rather it is the corruption of their heart.

Our willingness to worship Allah, especially if motivated and determined is affected by what we desire. Our desire is based on what the heart has attached itself to. The heart will attach itself to what it knows.

The actions of the believer are usually seen as strange, it is noticed in Ayyub and Zayd. But it is a cause for wonder in the likes of Mua'z ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه whose only reason for not wanting to die is so that he could fast in the hot days and pray in the cold nights. It is seen in Abu Hanifa رضي الله عنه who ran away from his town because he did not want to accept any position of authority, the judge in his case. In

Umar ibn Abdul-Azeez رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ who was the ruler of the Muslim world of his time and the people had so much money that they were looking for people to give money and yet he chose a life of abject poverty. Different stories all strange in their own way, begging the question of why would people want to do such things? But the answer is clear if you understand that their actions were because of their iman in Allah. The grateful heart does actions for Allah and the corrupted heart does actions for the dunya. And it is only the people who are grateful that will succeed.

The light is different for everyone, some brighter than others. It is affected by what we expose ourselves to, the books we read, the people we mingle with, the knowledge we know, the people who teach us, even the thoughts that we leave to wonder in our mind. It's in our best interest that we work to perfect our light, to make it as bright as it

can be, so that perhaps we would reach the station of those who are brought closer to Allah.

The Great escape.... That Failed

Once there was a man whom Allah had given wealth and children, the man was committing all sort of sinful deeds. When death came to him, he realized that he was about to meet Allah with those actions. He called his children and said to them: 'What type of father have I been to you?'

They replied: You have been a good father.

He said: 'But he (i.e. your father) has not stored any good deeds with Allah (for the Hereafter): if he should face Allah, Allah will punish him.

What could he do now that he was about to die with all his sinful actions and no time left to do any good, if I was to face Allah he thought 'He would surely punish me'.

So he said to his children:

"When I die, burn my body till I become mere coal and then grind it into powder, then wait for a windy day and scatter my powder into the air, for by Allah, if Allah has control over me, He will give me such a punishment as He has never given to anyone else."

Then he made them swear to Allah that they will do as he instructed. He died and his children as promised burned him, crushed him, and threw his ashes on a windy day.

How was Allah going to resurrect such a man whose ashes were scattered by the wind, if He created Him again, then it will be another person for the one who committed the sin was lost to the wind. Had this man done the unthinkable, had he truly escaped?

Nope! Allah commanded every single particle of his ashes to come together, which they did, and there he was

standing before Allah.

But what was he trying to escape from? The Day of Judgement, where the fruit of all our actions, good or bad will be manifested, the sowing of what we have reaped in the worldly life.

A lot of things will happen on that day, but I'll mention a few;

It starts with people being given their book that has recorded all their actions good, bad, little, great, nothing even the weight of an atom will be left out. The Kafir will say "what a book, it didn't leave out even a small thing". The people will be given their books on the right or the left, For those given their books on their right, they will be happy for the content of their book will be good. And they will be rejoicing how they knew this day was going to come and they prepared for it. Though some of them might have bad deeds, their good will outweigh it and they will be

saved from the disgrace of that Day.

As for those given their books on their left, some of them who knew they did evil on this world, knowing the book will land on their left would try to hide their left hand behind their back, and so it will land behind their back. They will be in remorse, wishing they had never been giving their record and that death was their end, even though they were running away from it in this worldly life. They will lament how their wealth has not availed them, and the power and honour they used to have has gone from them.

One by one people would be called, Allah will remind each one of the favors he bestowed upon him, and will ask what response he gave His messengers. Then for each of his actions, he will be held accountable.

A lot will happen during the accounting, but after the accounts have been settled, Allah will say to the people:

‘Whoever used to worship other than Allah, go and meet those whom you worshiped let them reward you this day and save you from the punishment’

So they will try to go to them, but it will be in vain. The angels will declare their innocence from them, the idols will say they were not even aware of their worship, the righteous men will not respond to them, for them never called anyone to worship them alongside Allah, and the jinn will disown them, all that the disbelievers worshiped besides Allah will reject their worship, in fact, they will deny them and be their enemies on that day.

And they will be left with no one to turn to on that horrible day. Allah will say to them; “Where are my so-called partners whom you used to claim (as gods besides Him)?” worshiping them besides Allah in the world, so that they can be of help to them. But they will be of no help to them, and all relations with them will be cut off,

and all the claims, evidences and proofs they were using in the world will have vanished from them.

So who was telling them to worship idols besides Allah? The truth of the matter will be revealed, and the people will see that it was the shayaatin that were calling them to disbelieve and worship others besides Allah, they will then say:

"Our Lord! These are they whom we led astray. We led them astray, as we were astray ourselves. We declare our innocence (from them) before You. It was not us they worshiped."

Again it will be said to the disbelievers:

"Call upon your (so-called) partners “,

And they will call upon them, but they will give no answer to them, and they will see the torment. The disbelievers will see on that day that all power belongs to Allah alone, they will wish if only they had been guided,

but it will be too late, and they will be full of regret.

O you assembly of jinn and mankind! "Did not there come to you Messengers from amongst you, reciting unto you My Verses and warning you of the meeting of this Day of yours?" They will say: "We bear witness against ourselves." It was the life of this world that deceived them. And they will bear witness against themselves that they were disbelievers. And on the Day when He will gather them (all) together (and say): "O you assembly of jinn! Many did you mislead of men," and their Auliya' (friends and helpers, etc.) amongst men will say: "Our Lord! We benefited one from the other, but now we have reached our appointed term which You did appoint for us."

(It will be said): "And O you Al-Mujrimun (criminals, polytheists, sinners, disbelievers in

the Islamic Monotheism, wicked evil ones, etc.)! Get you apart this Day (from the believers). Did I not ordain for you, O Children of Adam, that you should not worship Shaitan (Satan). Verily, he is a plain enemy to you. And that you should worship Me [Alone Islamic Monotheism, and set up not rivals, associate-gods with Me]. That is a Straight Path. And indeed he (Satan) did lead astray a great multitude of you. Did you not, then, understand? This is Hell which you were promised! Burn therein this Day, for that you used to disbelieve.

Abu Sufyan Ibn Al-Harith رضي الله عنه

Before the revelation, Abu Sufyan ibn Al-Harith was not just a friend to the prophet, he was also a close cousin and foster brother, it was said that they resembled each other.

When the prophet began to call people to Islam, the love and friendship Abu Sufyan had for the prophet turned to enmity and hatred, and he became amongst the worst enemies of Islam.

Being a skilled poet, he used his poetry to mock, opposed and attack the prophet. And though the prophet bore much harm, the harm of Abu sufyan hurt the prophet deeply, it was insulting, filled with foul and obscene words, and most of all, it was coming from the one whom the prophet held as a dear friend.

Abu Sufyan clearly showed his anger towards the prophet and Islam, he took every opportunity to conspire against him and hurt the Muslims.

As time went on, the prosecution faced by prophet and his companions in Mecca was unbearable, so they migrated from Mecca to live with the people of Medina. And as the years passed, the Muslim grew stronger, and an

incident led to a treaty between them and the people of Quraysh. And though it was in their favor, the Quraysh broke the treaty and so the prophet decided to conquer them.

As rumors spread that the prophet was coming to Mecca, Abu Sufyan despaired and feared for his life. He said to his family "Prepare yourself to leave Makkah because Muhammad is about to appear. If the Muslims get hold of me, I am a dead man." But they told him that there was nowhere to go because Arabs and foreigners are embracing Islam, and that the best thing was for him to do likewise. He refused, but as they spoke more, he became convinced of the truth and decided to accept Islam. When he heard that the Messenger of Allah was currently in Al-Abua, he made preparations taking his young child with him and setting off.

As he was reaching the camp he started to encounter

Muslims, the same Muslims that he harassed, hurt and fought with. So he disguised himself fearing that he will be recognized and killed before reaching the prophet and declaring his Islam. He kept veiling himself until he reached the prophet. He stood in front of the Prophet and unveiled himself, as the Prophet recognized him, he turned his face to the other direction, so he went to the other direction and again he turned his face. He kept standing before him and he kept turning away from him.

The Muslims, particularly those who were in Mecca noticed what was happening, having unveiled himself, they recognized him also, so they frowned and avoided him too. The Ansar (people of Medina) were wondering who is this man that is being shunned by the prophet. An Ansari by the name of Nu'aïman asked Umar about it and he informed of how much Abu Sufyan attacked and hurt the Muslims which provoked Nu'aïman. He came to Abu

Sufyan, raising his voice he said: "O enemy of Allah, you hurt the Messenger of Allah and his companions! Everyone from east to west knows of your hatred for the Prophet!" And he kept insulting and shouting at Abu Sufyan and the Muslim warriors were looking at him, pleased with what was happening.

As this was going on, Abu Sufyan saw his Uncle Abbas who was still newly Muslim and also an uncle to the Prophet. He went to him and pleaded with him that he should talk to Allah's Messenger for him. He said: "By Allah, I will never say a word to him after I saw his avoidance of you. Only if an opportunity appears will I do so". "O Uncle," Abu Sufyan said, "who will help me if you don't?" 'Abbas sternly replied, "I owe you nothing but what you just heard." This grieved him, feeling hopeless, he met his cousin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib' and spoke with him and he gave him the same response that he received from 'Abbas.

All the while Nu'aiman was still shouting and insulting Abu Sufyan. He felt embarrassed and humiliated and knew that he needed to do something about him.

He came to his uncle once more in desperation and cried, "O Uncle, if you can't make Muhammad forgive me, at least stop the man who is insulting me and encouraging others to do so." Abbas agreed. He went to Nu'aiman and explained to him Abu Sufyan's family ties with the Prophet, he told him that it's true that he hurt the Prophet and the Muslims., but the prophet is kindhearted and will still forgive him, and he is still his family. They spoke a while and Nu'aiman said: "Very well, I won't bother him anymore."

After a while the Muslim army reached and camped at Al-Jahfah, Abu Sufyan went and sat in front of the tent of the Prophet. When the Prophet came out and saw him, he shunned him still and left. Everywhere the prophet went,

Abu sufyan will follow, waiting for him, but the prophet never spoke to him.

As Abu Sufyan was in front of the tent of the prophet with his young son Jafar, it reached a point he could no longer bear it. He said: "By Allah, Rasulullah must let me in his tent or I will take this little boy of mine and go wandering the desert until we die from hunger and thirst!". The Arabs were known to stick to their honor even if it meant death, and when the Prophet heard him, he knew he meant it. Would he leave his cousin to wander in the desert and die, and what about Jafar who had no crime? The prophet called Jafar into the tent, he forgave him and accepted his Islam.

When the Prophet entered Mecca, Abu sufyan was with him, when he went to the Ka'bah, he was with him. Everywhere he went Abu Sufyan followed. He did not leave him for a single moment.

After the Prophet conquered Mecca and things settled, most of its people embraced Islam and he set them free. The surrounding Arab tribe outside Mecca however displeased with what had occurred as regards the destruction and removal of their idols [stones and wood], gathered to fight the Prophet as they had never gathered before, and they mobilized an army like no one ever had, since they wished to destroy, finally, Islam and the Muslims.

The Prophet went to meet them with the Muslim army, including Abu Sufyan. When he saw the large number of kuffar, he said to himself: "By Allah, I shall atone for all my previous hatred to the Prophet and he will be happy with me."

Not long after the battle started, the Muslims were ambushed by the enemies who were lying for them in wait, as arrows from the valley descended on them, and then

the enemies descended upon them as a strong unit. The Muslims being shocked, confused and killed fled, leaving the Messenger of Allah with less than 200 soldiers who stood firm. As they were fleeing, the messenger of Allah was on a mule which is a slow animal, neither suitable for fast battle nor escape and he was advancing towards the enemy as he was declaring his name aloud and saying:

(O servants of Allah! Come back to me! I am the Messenger of Allah)

(I am the Prophet, not lying! I am the son of Abdul-Muttalib!)

The enemies reached the prophet and he began fighting. Abu Sufyan who was behind the prophet seeing how fiercely he was fighting in the heat of battle broke the sheath of his sword and lunged towards the enemies. Abbas was holding the reins of the mule of the prophet standing next to him, Abu Sufyan came to the other side

and was repelling the enemies from reaching the prophet. The Prophet could not recognize him as he was wearing a chain mail that covered his face. He asked "Who is that?" "That is your first cousin, Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith" answered Abbas "so please be finally pleased with him, Ya Rasulullah." "I am," said the Prophet "and now Allah too has forgiven him all his previous wrong actions." He turned to Abu Sufyan and said, "O my cousin, fight! Fight!" Hearing those words, Abu Sufyan lunged further into the enemies just as the Muslims who fled were returning, which turned the tides of battle. The enemies fled and the Muslims followed, capturing many of them.

Though this is the story of Abu Sufyan, I'll like to add that twenty days after the battle, the enemies returned surrendering themselves, they accepted Islam and Allah's Messenger gave them the option of choosing between the

prisoners or the spoils of war. They chose the former, so he released their prisoners and gave them a share of the spoils of war which pleased them. And Allah accepted their repentance and Islam, in fact some of the accounts of the events were narrated by them. But I digress....

From the day of the Battle of Hunain, Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith ~ was in good standing with the Prophet and enjoyed his noble company, but the shame of his past made him to never look him in the eye. He devoted himself, night and day, to reciting the Qur'an and understanding Islam. He turned his back to this world and its pleasures and sought Allah with humility and devotion.

Once Rasulullah saw him entering the Masjid and said to 'A'ishah: "Do you know who that is, 'A'ishah?"

"No, Rasulullah," she replied.

"It's my cousin, ibn al-Harith. Look at him: he is the first to come to the Masjid and the last to leave, always

looking at his shoes [out of humility],"

He lived up to the Caliphate of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab. During that time, he was seen digging his grave with his own hands. Three days later he was on his deathbed, with his family mourning, he said to them "Don't cry for me. By Allah, I have not committed a major sin since I became Muslim". A short while after, he passed away and Umar led his funeral prayer. Abu Sufyan who started out as a fierce enemy of Islam, causing great harm to the prophet and Muslims., died with Umar and all the rest of the noble Sahaba grieving over him.

As much as we would like to be good, the truth is that no one is perfect. But that does not mean that there is no hope, there is still a chance for all of us no matter how evil we might be, Allah has given us the chance to repent.

Say: "O 'Ibadi (My slaves) who have transgressed against themselves (by committing

evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, verily Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

"And turn in repentance and in obedience with true Faith (Islamic Monotheism) to your Lord and submit to Him, (in Islam), before the torment comes upon you, then you will not be helped

We all have to start from where we are and make our way towards returning to Allah in obedience. We need to understand that Allah is the one true Lord and every good is from Him. So just as the people felt about Zayd, we should be grateful to Allah or even more. This requires us to ponder upon His favors on us, especially those that unfortunately we take for granted, good health, sustenance, good companion from family or friend etc., because that is where iman lies.

If we are truly grateful to Allah, we would not associate

partners with Him, rather we would try to come closer to him like the prophets and avoid resembling the idol worshippers. Did not Allah know that we were going to commit the sins we did and are still, and there are others worse, yet He still bestows His Mercy from us and gives us from His Kindness, generosity and grace? How can we repay such with kufr, yet that is what man does to his Lord. That is what Abu Sufyan did, he took Allah's Messenger as a liar, hated him for rebuking their idols and telling them to worship Allah alone, because his heart was corrupted. And when he realized his wrong, he exerted effort in order to recompense for what he has done, even if he was going to die doing it.

Our sins are as a result of the corruption in our knowledge, ignorance of our Lord and prevalence of our desires. So we need to also exert effort in purifying it and perfecting our light, using what Allah has given us, and in

doing so, hope that we will be among the party of Allah.

Verily, it is the Party of Allah that will be the successful.